

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

April 15, 1970

Miss Mary Lasker
29 Beekman Place
New York, New York

Dear Miss Lasker:

Thank you very much for your recent correspondence. As a member of the Senate Subcommittee on Health, I am deeply concerned about our current health crisis, and your comments and suggestions will be of assistance in developing constructive legislative programs.

Today's high medical costs -- such as physicians' fees, hospital charges and drugs -- are symptomatic of the more general crisis throughout our nation's health care system. The essential problem is that the organization, delivery and financing of health services have simply not kept pace with advances in medical science. Each of our major health programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid, must be reviewed on a continuing basis to assure that they are efficient and truly responsive to the needs of our people.

I feel that the federal government has both the obligation and the opportunity to provide leadership in developing solutions to these problems. At the very least, Congress should restore the severe budget cuts proposed by the Administration in funds for Federal health programs, especially in crucial areas like medical research and health manpower. Congress should also establish a National Health Council to set goals for a national policy, and to identify gaps, overlaps and inefficiency in government-financed health programs. In addition, Congress should provide for greater utilization and availability of health facilities, including the development of alternative facilities to costly in-hospital care. Finally, I believe that we should establish a comprehensive national health insurance program capable of bringing high quality medical care to all persons in the nation.

Last December, I dealt more fully with many of these issues in the course of an address I delivered as part of the Lowell Lecture Series in Boston. I am enclosing a copy of my remarks, and I hope you will find them of interest. Again, I want to thank you for taking the time to write me on this important subject.

Sincerely,

Edward M. Kennedy

Edward M. Kennedy

Enclosure